**Education and future profession**

- What are you going to do after finishing secondary school?

- After finishing secondary school I shall go on to further education. I shall become an applicant for entry. And as all applicants for entry I shall take competitive examinations. The entrance examinations I am reading for are held in July. I hope to pass them successfully.

- What are your friends going to do after finishing secondary school?

- Alice wants to become a professional pianist. But first, she is going to spend a year learning French. Peter's dream is to train as a pilot.

- What are your career prospects?

- Today a school-leaver can choose any career he or she likes. A school-leaver can become a journalist, a dentist, a surgeon, a designer, an economist, a manager and the like. I feel that things that will happen in my life will be wonderful. I think my classmates have the same feeling too. I hope that I'll be what I want to be.

- Where do you want to study?

- I want to study at Moscow State University named after Michael Lomonosov.

- What do you know about this University?

- Moscow State University is the largest university of Russia. It was founded in 1755. At that time there were only three faculties there.

- Who initiated the foundation of the University?

- The foundation of Moscow University was inspired by the radical philosophical and political views of Michael Lomonosov. The University was established by the order of Elizabeth, the Russian Empress. In the late 18th century Moscow University became the centre of advanced Russian science and social thought.

- What makes Moscow State University known world-wide?

- Moscow State University is known world-wide for its academic excellence. Today it is one of the best universities in the world. Here students can learn skills which fit them for a better career. Moscow State University reputation stays with its graduates - and their achievements in turn glorify it.

- What faculty are you going to study at?

- At first I wanted to become a biologist and study at the Biology Faculty. Until recently I had an idea that my interests lie in biology. I am fond of the recent discoveries in biology, especially in the field of cloning. The achievements of the past decades are startling. They have surpassed the most challenging dreams of the fantastic writers. But recently I have changed my mind. I want to be a historian.

- Is it your own choice?

- Of course, this is my own choice. But I want to say that it is not easy or simple to decide what career to choose. As is known the success or failure of adult life depends upon the choice made early in life. It should be said that I've discussed this problem with my parents and teachers. We also have spoken a lot with my friends about our career prospects.

- Why have you chosen history as your future speciality?

- I have chosen History as my future profession because I like it. Historians have tried to understand past human lives and societies. All serious historians have been engaged in collecting and recording historical facts. History gives not only an immense base of historical facts but it helps to understand the global historical processes. It gives historians an opportunity to interpret the processes of the past, explain the processes of the present and foresee the processes of the future. Historians respect facts, they try to avoid errors, and create their convincing interpretation.

- What do you know about the system of higher education in Russia?

- The Russian educational policy is a combination of economic and social objectives. In the terms of the ration of students to the total population Russia ranks among the top ten countries in the world. There are a lot universities and colleges in Russia. They teach almost in all subject areas: Arts, Sciences, Law, Engineering, etc. The staff are knowledgeable in their subjects. Higher educational institutions are headed by Rectors. Vice-rectors are in charge of the academic and scientific work. The Departments are headed by the Deans. There are subdivisions within Departments. Higher educational institutions train undergraduates and postgraduate students in one specialization. Usually after completing five years of study students receive a university degree. For five years at the end of each year students have oral examinations. Moreover, they write a graduate paper for a university degree. They write dissertations for advanced degrees. After three years of post-graduate work and the writing of the dissertation it is possible to obtain a candidate degree.

- Is higher education compulsory in Russia?

- Higher education is not compulsory in Russia. School is compulsory and free for all. If applicants for entry pass their entrance exams successfully they are admitted to the University free of charge, otherwise they must pay a tuition fee. Institutions of higher education include: technical training colleges, teachers training colleges, universities which offer bachelor's and master's degrees programmes.

- What can you say about school education in Russia?

- Russian children start school at the age of six. But most of them have learnt letters in kindergarten which is now part of primary school. Primary and secondary schools consist of eleven years of classes which meet for about nine months a year, five days a week and five hours a day. Every school has a 'core curriculum' of Russian, mathematics, science and PT. A variety of subjects are taught at lyceums and gymnasiums. In Russia there is a nine-year compulsory education, but to enter a university one has to study two years more. All Russian schools until recently have been state-subsidized.

- When do school children have holidays?

- Russian pupils have four holidays a year. The academic year is split into four terms. Autumn vacation and spring vacation are very short. They last only a week each. Winter vacation lasts two weeks. Summer vacation is the longest one. It lasts from two to three months.

- Do Russian students have holidays?

- Students have holidays twice a year. They take a fortnight rest after winter exams, and they are holidaying for four weeks after summer exams.

- What problems does Russian educational system face?

- The systems of secondary and higher education in Russia are going through a transitional period. As for secondary education, the idea of replacing eleven years of classes by twelve years of classes is being discussed now. I doubt that it will be welcomed by school children. They prefer to finish school as early as possible. Some of them finish school at the age of fifteen and enter different universities. Too young students is one of the recent problems of Russian universities. Other problems concern the reforms within universities. The main objectives of higher education reform are: decentralization of the higher education system, development of the autonomy of higher educational institutions, expansion of academic freedoms of faculties and students, development of new financial mechanism.

- What do you know about British universities?

- There are 46 universities in Britain. But not all universities are equal. They differ from one another in history, tradition, academic organization. Oxford and Cambridge are the oldest world-known universities. The University of London is one of the best UK's universities.

- What does a British university usually consist of?

- A British university usually consists of colleges. The departments of the colleges are organized into faculties.

- Does University teaching in the UK differ from that in other countries?

- Yes, it does. University teaching in the UK differs greatly at both under-graduate and postgraduate levels from that in many other countries.

- What does an undergraduate programme consist of?

- An undergraduate programme consists of a series of lectures, seminars, tutorials and laboratory classes which in total account for about 15 hours per week. Following a particular programme students take series of lecture courses which may last one academic term or the whole year. Associated with each lecture course are seminars, tutorials, laboratory classes which illustrate the topics presented in the lectures. Lectures are given to large groups of students (from 20 to 200). Seminars and tutorials are much smaller than lecture classes and in some departments can be on a one-to-one basis - one member of staff and one student.

- Do students in Britain prepare work in advance?

- Yes, as far as I know, students in Britain prepare work in advance for seminars and tutorials. And this can take the form of researching a topic for discussion by writing essays or by solving problems.

- How long do seminars and tutorials last?

- Lectures, seminars and tutorials are all one hour in length, laboratory classes last two or three hours.

- Do students in Britain have supervisors?

- In Britain much emphasis is put on the private study nature of a degree. Each student has a tutor whom he can consult on any matter whether academic or personal. The teaching encourages students to learn in the most effective way.

- What terms is the academic year split into?

- The academic year is split into three terms. Formal teaching takes place in the first two terms which last for twenty four weeks in total. The third term is reserved for classes and examinations and lasts for six weeks.

- How long must a student study to take a UK degree!

- University degree courses extend from three to four years. After three years of study a university graduate will leave with the Degree of Bachelor of Arts or Science. He can continue to take his Master's Degree and then the Doctor's Degree.

- Do many British go on to higher education?

- Several important social developments that occurred in the decades after World War II renewed the vigour of the young to study at the universities. The rising standard of education became especially evident, as the number of pupils going on to higher education increased dramatically after World War II and was matched by a major expansion in the number of universities and other institutions of higher education.

- Is education important for Americans?

- Americans place a high value on education. Universal access to quality education has been one of the nation's historic goals.

- When did Americans start to place emphasis upon education?

- From the first years of their colonial life Americans placed great emphasis upon education. In the seventeenth century the colonies made elementary schooling compulsory. Grammar schools and academies flourished. America's first college, Harvard was founded in 1636. Harvard with a library of five thousand volumes, and good scientific apparatus, and the classics lagged little behind the best European universities in the 18th century. A number of colleges were founded in the middle and lower colonies -which trained Thomas Jefferson and many other public figures. The College of Philadelphia was set up by Benjamin Franklin in 1755. In 1865 education was becoming available to all.

- What is a peculiar feature of American education?

- The peculiar feature of American education is the absence of national administration. Each of the 50 states controls and directs its own schools. Most states require that children attend schools from the time they reach six or seven years old until they are sixteen or seventeen.

- Is there any uniform school organization or curriculum throughout the nation?

- There is no uniform school organization or curriculum throughout the nation. But certain common features exist.

- What are they?

- Pre-school education is part of. the elementary schools. Elementary and secondary schools consist of twelve years of classes. Almost every elementary school curriculum includes English, mathematics, science, social studies, music, art and physical education. Many schools include classes teaching basic computer skills.

- What do Americans do after finishing secondary school?

- As far as I know, they enter colleges or universities. There are a lot of technical training schools, community colleges; colleges offering four-year bachelor degree programmes; and universities which contain one or more colleges and graduate schools offering master's or doctoral degree programmes in the USA.

- What factors determine the college or university prestige?

- The factors determining an institution's prestige are the quality of the teaching faculty; quality of research facilities; the number and competence of applicants for admission.

- What do you know about University education in the USA?

- There is no National University in the USA. Each state controls and supports at least one University. The National Government gives no direct financial aid to them.

- Do Americans go to the University free of charge?

- The students do not go to the University free of charge. Everyone must pay a tuition fee. The amount varies from state to state. Students' total expenses throughout the year are very high. And though each University offers a number of scholarships many students have to work to pay their expenses.

- Do most of the US Universities have a campus?

- Most of the US Universities have a central campus. Colleges of Law, Business, Medicine, Engineering, Music, Journalism can be found on one campus.

- Do the US students take the same courses?

- No, they do not. The students do not take the same courses. They attend courses at various colleges. During the first two years they follow a basic programme. It means that every student must select at least one course from each of the basic fields of study: English, science, modern languages, history or physical education. After the first two years every student majors in one subject and minors in another. A student can major in history and minor in sociality. In addition to these major and minor courses he can select other subjects according to his professional interest.

- When do the US students receive degrees?

- After completing four years of study the students receive a Bachelor's Degree (either BA or B.Sc.). With an additional year of study one may get a Master's Degree and after two or three years of graduate work and writing of the dissertation it is possible to obtain a Doctoral degree.

- When do the US students take their exams?

- Over four years at the end of each year students have a final written examination. They take oral exams and write a dissertation only for advanced degrees.

- Is learning important for society?

- Certainly. The idea that a well-schooled society is a prosperous and stable society, and therefore that educated people is a desirable goal for a nation, dates back to the year 2500 BC. In his "Great Learning" Confucius wrote: "When knowledge is extended, the will becomes sincere. When the will is sincere, the mind is correct. When the mind is correct, the self is cultivated. When the self is cultivated the clan is harmonized. When the clan is harmonized the country is well governed. When the country is well governed there will be peace throughout the land." Thus education is the pledge of peace. Peace is important for people to be happy.